

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

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USLO PEKING

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, IN, SK

SUBJECT: SIKKIM

REF: NEW DELHI 5120

SUMMARY: THE GOI IS PREPARING A BILL TO AMEND THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION TO MAKE SIKKIM A "CONSTITUENT UNIT" OF INDIA. THE GOI HAS APPARENTLY NOT REACHED A DEFINITE DECISION ON THE CHOGYAL, ALTHOUGH THE INSTITUTION OF THE CHOGYAL IS NOT EXPECTED TO SURVIVE. MRS. GANDHI HAS TOLD OPPOSITION LEADERS THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO ABNORMAL TROOP MOVEMENTS ON THE SINO-SIKKIM BORDER AT NATHU LA. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PRIME MINISTER REPORTEDLY ASSURED THE KAZI AT THEIR MEETING IN DELHI APRIL 16 THAT THE GOI WOULD TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO FACILITATE THE EARLY IMPLEMENTATION
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OF THE SIKKIM ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION WHICH CALLED FOR SIKKIM'S

FULL INTEGRATION INTO INDIA AND THE ABOLITION OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE CHOGYAL. MRS. GANDHI REPORTEDLY EXPLAINED TO THE KAZI AND FIVE SIKKIM GOVERNMENT CABINET MEMBERS ACCOMPANYING HIM THAT THE GOI WOULD SOON INTRODUCE A NEW CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT BILL TO MAKE SIKKIM A CONSTITUENT UNIT OF THE UNION OF INDIA. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, THE BILL IS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED TO BE INTRODUCED IN THE INDIAN LOWER HOUSE ON APRIL 23 AND THE UPPER HOUSE APRIL 26. IT WOULD NOT BECOME LAW UNTIL RATIFIED BY A MAJORITY OF INDIA'S STATES.

2. IT IS LESS CLEAR FROM REPORTS HERE THAT MRS. GANDHI TOLD THE KAZI WITH REGARD TO THE CHOGYAL. THE KAZI TOLD JOURNALISTS AFTER THE MEETING THAT HIS DELEGATION WAS "SATISFIED WITH THE ASSURANCES GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER," BUT WE ASSUME FROM THE DEARTH OF LOCAL INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT THAT THE GOI HAS NOT DEFINITELY DECIDED WHAT ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN WITH REGARD TO THE CHOGYAL, EVEN IF THE POLITICAL INSTITUTION ITSELF WILL BE ABOLISHED. IS HE TO BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN GANGTOK? IS HE TO BE DIVESTED OF HIS PALACE AND REAL PROPERTIES IN SIKKIM AND GRANTED A PRIVY PURSE? IS HE TO BE OFFERED A TITULAR POSITION? THE KAZI OF COURSE WANTS THE CHOGYAL OUT OF SIKKIM. IN A DELHI TELEVISION INTERVIEW LATE APRIL 16 HE POINTEDLY ALLEGED THAT THE SIKKIM POLICE AND INDIA'S CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE WERE NOW PROTECTING THE CHOGYAL AGAINST PUBLIC ANGER: A MOB OF 16,000 WAS PREVENTED FROM STORMING THE PALACE THE SAME DAY, ACCORDING TO THE KAZI. THE KAWI TOLD REPORTERS AFTER RETURNING TO GANGTOK APRIL 17 THAT MOST OF THE CHOGYAL'S PROPERTY IN FACT BELONGS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM. THE CHOGYAL'S CLAIMS WOULD BE CONSIDERED SYMPATHETICALLY, ACCORDING TO THE KAZI, IF HE CHANGED HIS "HOSTILE AND OBSTRUCTIVE" ATTITUDE.

3. MRS. GANDHI AND FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN MET WITH OPPOSITION LEADERS IN PARLIAMENT APRIL 17 AND REPORTEDLY FOUND WIDE SUPPORT FOR CURRENT GOI POLICY ON SIKKIM. ACCORDING TO NEWS SERVICE REPORTS THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER CHARACTERIZED THE CHINESE REACTION TO THE SIKKIM ASSEMBLY'S RESOLUTION A VERY ADVERSE. THE PRIME MINISTER NOTED IN REPLY TO A QUESTION, HOWEVER, THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO ABNORMAL TROOP MOVEMENTS ON THE CHINESE SIDE OF THE BORDER IN THE NATHU LA AREA LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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(THE SCENE OF THE LAST SERIOUS SINO-INDIAN BORDER CLASH IN 1967.)

4. MEANWHILE THE CHOGYAL REMAINS IN HIS PALACE, WITHHOLDING FURTHER COMMENT ON HIS SITUATION AND APPARENTLY NOT HAVING ANY IMMEDIATE PLANS FOR A COUNTERMOVE.
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